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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA'S CHILD ABUSE REGISTRY NOT YET OPERATIONAL

REF: STATE 121873

¶1. South Africa does not have a searchable registry or database of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. In a December 4, 2008, telcon, Selema Mashiane, a Social Worker in the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Social Development (DoSD), explained to Conoff that the DoSD was in the process of developing such a registry in conjunction with the Department of Justice and the South African Police Service. He emphasized that this electronic registry would maintain an active list of victims and convicted perpetrators of child abuse. "The list will be searchable by social workers and those working in child protection related agencies across South Africa," according to Mashiane.

¶2. Although South Africa does not yet have a searchable registry of substantiated cases of child abuse, the DoSD does maintain an electronic database of children who have suffered from child abuse. This registry is Microsoft Word-based and uses an electronic form to capture the locations and names of potentially abused children, their parents, and/or their caretakers. The DoSD's Child Protection Unit started the database in 2006 and has collected approximately 17,000 names to date. Mashiane said that the DoSD's provincial offices provide monthly updates to this national list, adding approximately 1,000 names to the list each month. DoSD system administrators can search the 17,000-name list, but the names do not reflect convictions or a list of perpetrators of child abuse/neglect. Mashiane drew a clear distinction between the DoSD database in existence and the searchable registry of child abuse that the DoSD was currently developing with its partners to track child abuse convictions.

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